

# Renewable Energy Project Permitting in California

## California Biodiversity Council

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## Energy Commission Renewable and Nonrenewable Energy Generation Project Jurisdiction

- Thermal Power Plants 50 Megawatts and Greater in Size
- Includes: Solar Thermal, Geothermal, and Biomass
- Does Not Include: Wind, Photovoltaic, Hydro, and Wave Generation



# Renewable and Nonrenewable Generation Siting Jurisdiction of Other Agencies and Tribes in California

- Municipal utilities, city or county land planning departments, tribes, and federal government agencies if project located on federal land:
  - All projects less than 50 megawatts and non-thermal projects (wind, hydroelectric, solar photovoltaic) 50 megawatts or greater.



# Energy Commission Siting and Permitting Process

- Certified regulatory program that results in a consolidated permit and coordination with appropriate federal, state, and local agencies
- Energy Commission is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); it produces several environmental and decision documents rather than an Environmental Impact Report.
- Review performed by a full-time civil service staff of engineers and environmental experts -- 19 technical areas



# Energy Commission Siting and Permitting Process #2

- Open public process with Public Adviser
- Mandated twelve-month licensing process following a completeness determination
- Oversight of the facility during its lifetime from construction through operation to decommissioning and closure



# Uncertainties/Issues Associated with Siting Renewable Generation Facilities

- Financing
- Power Purchase Agreement
- Water use for power plant cooling and for solar, mirror washing
- Transmission interconnection issues
- Biological resource mitigation
- Community opposition regarding visual impacts, noise, traffic, site specific issues



# Projects Currently Under Review at the Energy Commission

- 26 projects with a generating capacity of 11,227 MWs are under review
- 5 Solar Thermal Projects = 2,427 MWs
- 1 Solar-Biomass Hybrid Project = 106 MWs
- 1 Natural Gas-Solar Hybrid Project = 50 MWs
- 19 Natural Gas Projects = 8,550 MWs

## **Additional Projects That May Be Filed in 2009**

- 9 Solar Thermal Projects = 4,100 MWs
- 1 Geothermal Project = 200 MWs
- 6 Natural Gas Projects = 2,260 MWs



